

FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS 1871-
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dislike your projects of restoring the monarchy. I mistrust the influence which your clericals would have on the Comte de Ghambord." The threat was repeated in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*^ which declared that from the moment France identified herself with Rome she would become the enemy of Germany, and that peace could not subsist with a France subject to the, Vatican. " If France supports the Catholics in Germany," he added ominously, " I shall not wait till she is ready, as she will be in two years, but I shall seize a favourable opportunity." Moltke declared in January; 1874, that another war was inevitable before many years, and Biilow, the Foreign Minister, warned the Ambassador that the repetition of episcopal imprudences might lead to very grave complications. On February 10, 1874, Queen Victoria wrote to the Emperor William urging him to keep the peace despite French provocations, and received the reply, " We shall not make war."

The Bishops were muzzled though not punished, and the rest of 1874 passed without incident, except that in the first general election in Germany fourteen out of fifteen members from the Reichsland protested against the annexation, demanded a plebiscite and left the Reichstag. The Chancellor had no desire to attack France, but he did not intend to allow another attack on Germany. " We wish to keep the peace," he observed in 1874 to Hohenlohe; " but if the French so order their preparations that in five years they will be ready and determined to strike, then in three years we shall begin war." Since the Treaty of Frankfurt imposed no limit on French armaments he could only proceed by warnings and threats.

Incensed by French intransigence Bismarck lashed out at

the Francophiles of the Rhine provinces.¹ The purpose of the annexation, he proclaimed in the Reichstag, was not to make them happy but to build a bastion against the everlasting interruptions of the French. " We conquered these lands in a war of self-defence. Our soldiers shed their blood not for Alsace-Lorraine but for the German Reich, for its unity, for the defence of its frontiers. We took the lands, in order that the French in their next attack, which God grant may be distant but which they are planning, should not have the Weissenburg salient to start from, but that we should have a

¹* There are useful chapters on Alsace-Lorraine in Wahl, *Deutsche Geschichte, 1871-1914*, especially vol. i and 4, cp. Schneegans' *Memoiren*.